

CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes

For the Meeting Held On : May 28, 2015
Meeting Time : 6:30 pm

Location : Council on Aging – Conference Room
Address : 328 North Main Street, East Longmeadow, MA

Meeting Posted On... **Day:** Friday **Date:** 05 / 26 / 2015
(48 hrs required)

Is Meeting Being Recorded by Digital Recorder: Yes ☒ No ☐
The Minutes of this Meeting are being taken by: Marge Larocca

Committee Members: (check if attended)

Dawn Starks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Russell Denver	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	William Fonseca	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	George Kingston	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Larry Levine	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eric Madison	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Raymond Miller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tom O'Connor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ralph Page	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						

Attendees: Marge Larocca

Did the Chair release any prior Executive Session Minutes?
Dates of Executive Session Released :

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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TOPIC / MATTER #1
Comments on Public Hearing

Summary of Matter Discussed :

- The Chairman opened the meeting.
- Mr. O'Connor distributed the document: Public Hearing Results and followed with a description of the information it contained. He stated that the document was based on comments that were received at the public hearing, and that the majority of the comments favored a strong Town Manager and five member council.
- Mr. O'Connor explained that the public notes shown in the document don't affect the form of government and followed with a description of the notes.
- Mr. Denver gave a description of the structure of a charter and discussion followed about: the functions of an Audit Committee, an ADA Coordinator being part of the Building Department, a department to centralize Planning, Zoning and Conservation. Mr. Kingston gave a description of an ADA Coordinator.
- An explanation was given about internal audits and Mr. Denver noted that the Appropriations Committee had not received audit findings for five years and had expressed their dissatisfaction to the Board of Selectmen about audit mandates that weren't done. He added that an audit committee might see that audit controls would be enforced, and that there is a lack of communication between boards and departments.

- The Chairman stated that they now have to think about having one or more public hearings, when to schedule them and the need to hold them in an adequate space. Discussion followed about having a public hearing prior to the Fall Special Town Meeting, but it was determined that it cannot be held prior to a Town Meeting. It was suggested that a report can be given, and/or an informational session can be held and then follow up a week later with a hearing.
- Discussion followed about pros and cons of conducting a survey through the Town's website, and about the timeline being short for publicizing the recent public hearing. It was decided that the robo-call process worked well and should be utilized for future public hearings.

Documents or Exhibits for this Matter:

- Public Hearing Results

Votes Taken Under this Matter :

- None

TOPIC / MATTER #2

Consultant

Summary of Matter Discussed :

- Discussion began about using a consultant.
- The document: Selection criteria/framework for hiring a consultant was distributed, and a description was given of the information in the document. Mr. Miller gave a description of the process the previous Charter Commission used in hiring a consultant. Mr. Madison stated that he called the Collins Center at UMASS to discuss their suggestions of the scope of work needed in hiring a consultant. He added that he wants to investigate if any vendors are on the state contract, which would streamline the effort to use a consultant. He will bring any information to next meeting.
- Mr. Miller explained that the prior Commission had asked for an additional \$20,000 so that they didn't have to make several additional requests for funding, and added that the biggest interest in the consultants' expertise was in writing the charter document.

Documents or Exhibits for this Matter:

- Selection criteria/framework for hiring a consultant

Votes Taken Under this Matter :

- None

TOPIC / MATTER #3

Town Data

Summary of Matter Discussed :

- The document: Comparable Towns was distributed. Discussion followed about the data for surrounding towns. Mr. Denver noted the following changes for the document: Wilbraham and South Hadley have a Town Manager and Belchertown has an Executive Secretary.
- Discussion began about inviting some individuals from the comparable towns to come to speak with the Charter Commission members about the process they went through with their change in form of government.

- A conversation started about how the Town is growing. Mr. Kingston stated that the Town is growing by migration, that the births are 1/3 of deaths and the Town is becoming less of a hometown.

Documents or Exhibits for this Matter:

- Comparable Towns

Votes Taken Under this Matter :

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TOPIC / MATTER #4

Refine Schedule & Assignments

Summary of Matter Discussed :

- The Chairman spoke about having much of the commission's schedule & assignments in place.
- It was determined that Mr. Madison will contact Robin Crosbie and Mr. Denver will contact Mike Sullivan to invite them to meet with the Charter Review Commission.
- A conversation followed about setting up interviews with department heads and attending meetings of their boards.
- It was determined that the members would ask the department heads two or three questions, and then have a conversation during the interviews.

Documents or Exhibits for this Matter:

- None

Votes Taken Under this Matter :

- None

7:57 PM: Motion to Adjourn

Next Meeting: June 11, 2015 – 6:30PM – 328 North Main St. – Media Room

MEETING FOLLOW UP:
Schedule Meetings & Interviews with Depts & Boards
Set up meetings with surrounding communities
PRIOR MEETING NOTES: